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Title: The case for weeding - The Buskerud Bandits contribution to a knowledge-based discarding practice in Norwegian public libraries

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Abstract

This article explores discarding and collection development in Norwegian public libraries, based on a local discarding initiative in Buskerud County. It demonstrates how a systematic development project can change the library employees' practices and have an impact locally, regionally and nationally. Using different cases, the article examines how discarding became part of the professional discourse. The change-work had an action-based, innovative and practical approach based on both theory and empirical evidence. The article also indicates that change-work has best effect with a solid grounding in library management and when numerous initiatives are involved.

Introduction

This article presents the case for deselecting library materials in public libraries. Systematic discarding is an important yet difficult part of collection development. Developing sound practices for weeding library material requires more than guidelines.

In spite of the advice, it has been observed and reported that too little weeding is being practiced and that library shelves contain quantities of unused and unwanted materials. It is hard to find practicing librarians who feel that sufficient weeding is being done in their libraries (Slote, 1982, p. 19).

Librarians need to have a personal relationship with this work. Weeding requires insight, motivation, a positive attitude and clear leadership. Since most librarians discard too little and too randomly, the librarian field needs to develop new procedures through a process of systematic change. Professional weeding requires organisations that are constantly learning.

Buskerud County Library is working on this task with a combination of old and new instruments. This article describes and analyses our experiences with discarding and collection development over the past six years. The article describes how the project began and how it has evolved from an independent local initiative into a nationwide enterprise with courses, debates, seminars and the development of tools for collection development.

The article has two main sections. The first describes the project's development and what we have learned along the way; not only regarding weeding, but also development activities and change work in the librarian field in general. The second section shows how these experiences can be interpreted and elaborated on through

different theoretical perspectives. This diversity of theory is typical of practical disciplines. There is no overarching theoretical model that governs library operations. In this way, applied sciences differ from traditional academic subjects. What holds the Library Sector together is not theories, but practices. The librarian field is consolidated through common professional practices. This means that our project is not just a matter of practical utility, but the development of library science as an independent discipline.

The story

During the late winter of 2008, the County Library in Buskerud was approached by a newly appointed head librarian in a small municipality. The library, which was located in a small tourist community, needed assistance with discarding. With a collection of almost thirty thousand volumes, the books had out grown their shelves and made the situation untenable for both users and staff.

The County Library was willing to help and three employees with special interest in weeding travelled to Hallingdal. What met us there, we will never forget. There had not been a systematic weeding process for the last fifty years. Part of the collection was almost impossible to access. The library, with a staff of one and a half full-time employees (FTEs), had not had the capacity to keep the library up to date. The shelves with cookbooks and handicrafts were the most cluttered I've seen in my life as a librarian.

A book on "Daily Life Computing" from 1982 on the shelf was a powerful signal that something had to be done. During the two days we discarded eighteen percent of the book collection. In hindsight we probably should have weeded even more.

Non-fiction for adults was the most obsolete category. A third of the books in this category were discarded.

What began as a weeding effort in a small public library was the start of a comprehensive commitment to discarding. Since 2008, the County Library has developed a number of initiatives with local, regional and national impact.

Why weed?

The experience from the public library in Hallingdal made us ask the question: How can we create a systematic and evidence-based weeding practice in Norwegian public libraries? This article summarises our activities and findings so far; working on change work in general and collection development and discarding in particular.

Collection development belongs to the core activity of the library work. «Fundamentals of Collection Development and Management» describes the main tasks as:

...selection of materials in all formats, collection policies, collection maintenance (selection for weeding and storage, preservation, and serials cancellation), budget and finance, assessment of needs of users and potential users, liaison and outreach activities related to the collection and its users, collection assessment and evaluation, and planning for cooperation and resource sharing (Johnson, 2009, p. 1).

Collection development is by nature dynamic and changes in synchronisation with society.

Collection Size in Norwegian public libraries

Discarding involves consistent efforts to take library materials out of a collection to maintain the relevance of the collection to the users. There can be many reasons to remove materials from the collection. Three of the main reasons to discard books are: 1) that the material is dated, 2) it is worn out, or 3) it is no longer used.

Judging by the size of the Norwegian book collections, weeding is given low priority. In 2012 the Norwegian public libraries contained 3.7 books per. capita. This is significantly more than the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) recommends in its guidelines for public libraries (Koontz and Gubbin, 2010). A consequence of the large collections is that many Norwegian public libraries look more like warehouses for books and not attractive places for culture, education and activities. IFLA recommends two to three books per capita, depending on the size of the municipality. Based on national statistics from 2012, IFLA's recommendations imply a reduction of book collections at the country level from 18 to somewhere between 10 and 15 million volumes.

One way to describe the use of the collection is by turnover rate. Turnover rate is calculated by dividing the actual lending by the total number of library materials. Since the turnover rate shows the actual use of the collections, it's an important indicator in collection development.

What we should regard as a reasonable circulation figure will vary with the type of media and community size. Unfortunately, there is little academic and professional discussion on turnover rates and there are no recommended standards. The table below shows the turnover rates (median) for different categories of books by size of municipality. The statistical materials are from 2012 and 2010 for Norwegian public

libraries. The 2010 figures are in brackets (see Table 1):

Median	Non-fiction for adults	Fiction for adults	Children's books
+50 thousand inhabitants	0.89 (0.89)	1.45 (1.39)	2.05 (2.01)
+ 20	0.68 (0.68)	1.13 (1.07)	1.67 (1.80)
+10	0.59 (0.61)	1.47 (0.85)	1.38 (1.33)
+5	0.40 (0.41)	0.61 (0.57)	0.92 (0.95)
<5	0.23 (0.43)	0.47 (0.51)	0.50 (0.95)

Table 1 Turnover rate from 2012 and 2010 (Source: Statistics Norway)

The pattern is clear. Children's books have a much higher turnover rate than fiction for adults, which again is higher than non-fiction for adults. Larger municipalities have higher circulation figures than smaller municipalities.

Nine of the fifteen cells in the table are below one (figures from 2012). A turnover rate below one means that every book on average is loaned out less than once per year. Although there are no standards for turnover rate, it seems fair to say that a turnover number under one is too low. The result is that book borrowers find the same books on the shelves each time they visit the library.

We also know that most books lose relevance rather quickly. Borrowers usually want newly published books. Demand drops rapidly when the books get older. A comprehensive discarding of non-fiction books in Drammen's public library in 2012, showed that twenty thousand books, of a total of forty-four thousand, had not been circulating for the past five years.

The evaluation of the State Purchasing Programme for Contemporary Norwegian non-fiction books managed by the Norwegian Arts Council showed that the lending curve of non-fiction published in 2005, peaked in 2006, with 66 thousand loans. In 2007, the loans of the same books dropped to 27 thousand. The half-life was thus less than one year. We unfortunately do not have studies showing further progress of the curve, but it is very likely that it continues to decline (Slaattaa, 2008 p. 56). The findings indicate that a lot of non-fiction published soon loses its relevance in public libraries and quickly becomes a subject for weeding (see Figure 1).

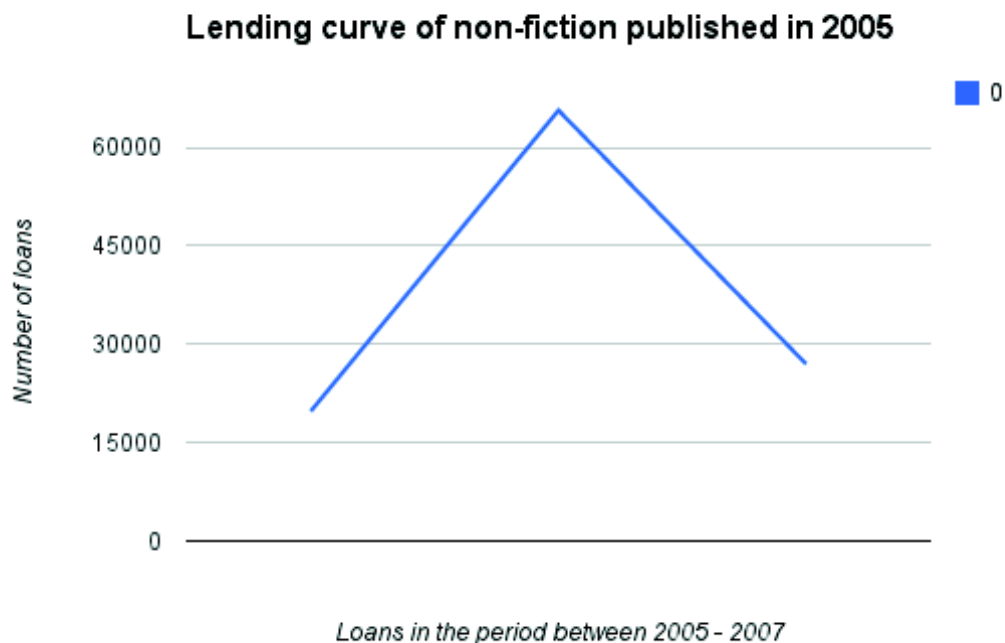


Figure 1 Loans between 2005-2007

Although collections in Norway are still large, national statistics show that there has been a reduction in public library book collections. The last decade shows a decrease of twelve percent, from 20.8 million books in 2002 to 18.3 million in 2012. Nevertheless, here we should distinguish between children's and adult literature.

While the number of children's books remains constant, the decline is the result of cuts in book collections for adults. Books for adults have been reduced by 18% between 2002 and 2012. After 2008 discarding of books has increased. Between 2008 and 2012, total collections declined by 1.4 million volumes (Source: Statistics Norway, 2013).

The figure below illustrates the decrease in books for adults in public libraries, in both fiction and non-fiction literature. Non-fiction is represented by columns and fiction by the line. The graph shows that the decrease is relatively evenly distributed between non-fiction and fiction (see Figure 2).

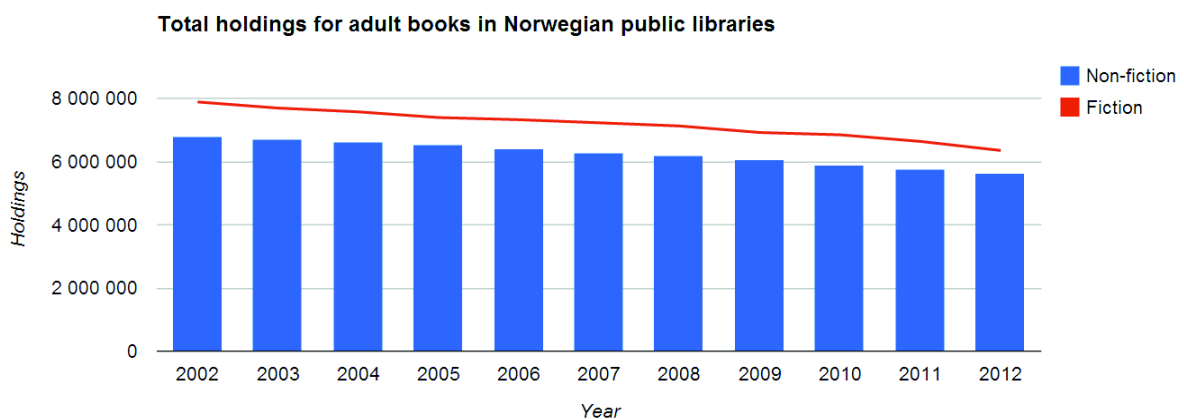


Figure 2 Holdings for adult books

We find various explanations for this trend. An evaluation of the Government's commitment to culture points out that public libraries are experiencing a decrease in funding for the procurement of library materials (Ministry of Culture, 2013). An increased focus on discarding and collection development can also explain the figures.

The Buskerud Bandits

The discarding of books in Hallingdal initiated our interest in collection development. It also led to recognition that we lacked knowledge of how to discard. Two colleagues from Buskerud County Library and myself, recognised the need to develop tools for more systematic discarding.

Over the last six years we have focused on systematic collection development through a series of concrete measures. These measures have evolved through several parallel processes. Some are based on existing empirical evidence and current research, while others are related to the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and social media in libraries. This initiative took on a clear entrepreneurship approach.

In our work, it was important to remember that all libraries are independent entities and Buskerud County Library is there to assist other libraries and is not a superior authority. We did not start with a big, overarching plan, but rather worked in a wide variety of local libraries, both public and school libraries, using innovation and change processes. It is the sum of parallel initiatives over the past six years, which has lifted collection development and discarding out of the local library into a larger context. The County Library has served as the central node and catalyst in a regional network in the County of Buskerud.

The discarding in Hallingdal demonstrated that we needed dedicated people, who could focus on this type of work. The group that conducted the first discarding soon acquired the nickname the "Buskerud Bandits". The name gave the group identity and became an effective visualisation of the Bandits weeding processes.

The concept has given us quick renown in the library field, even outside the

county's borders. As the Buskerud Bandits we have gradually built up our expertise and gained confidence to start discarding projects throughout Buskerud. Other librarians find us trustworthy, based on our results and our professional expertise, not our belonging to the County Library and the County Administration.

The main task for the County libraries in Norway is to serve as regional development agencies. The Buskerud Bandits experience shows that proximity to the field of practice is essential in order to make change happen in the way librarians do their work.

We only do our weeding work on invitation. This is very important. Each library must see the need and the necessity to discard. The Bandits have the capacity to do two to three discarding processes annually, which is usually carried out over two days. Together with the local staff the Buskerud Bandits normally go through a collection of up to fifteen thousand books or other forms of library materials.

In the following section we will present the most important measures the Buskerud County Library has developed, systematised and implemented.

The Continuous Review Evaluation and Weeding - guidelines for discarding

Prior to conducting the first weeding session the Buskerud Bandits searched for literature that could give more knowledge about collection development and discarding of library materials. The most important guidelines we used were the Continuous Review Evaluation and Weeding guidelines (CREW). This is a manual about discarding that has been used for more than 30 years in libraries in Texas, USA (Larson, 2012).

We found the manual very useful and early on felt the need for a Norwegian translation and adaptation. We contacted the publisher, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and were granted permission to make a Norwegian version of the manual. The translation and adaptation of the Norwegian version was completed and adapted to Norwegian conditions in 2011. This was the first edition in a language other than English.

To ensure the best possible distribution of the manual, I also established a website (crewinorge.org), where the guidelines are published. The handbook can also be downloaded in booklet version from the website. It is printed as a separate booklet and sold through the county library. In the period from February 2011 to January 2014, there were more than 5900 visits to the website. Of these, more than 3500 were unique visitors. There have been close to eighteen thousand page views, which are high in view of the fact, that the Norwegian public- and school libraries together have less than three thousand employees. Of an edition of 500, there are now only 20 left in stock. Several county libraries, Buskerud included have purchased and distributed the manual to all their libraries.

CREW serves as both a handy reference and learning tool for increasing knowledge of discarding and collection development. The Norwegian translation of CREW has been included on the curriculum at the Library and Information Science (LIS) studies programme at the University College of Oslo and Akershus since 2011. In the autumn of 2013, I was a guest teacher at the LIS studies giving a lecture about weeding and the use of CREW. The Bandits have received positive feedback from the library sector that CREW is a useful tool for collection development and discarding in Norwegian. In a survey of collection development conducted in the

autumn of 2012, one of the respondents stated: "In our library there is a time before and after CREW and that is it. Thank you!" (translated from Røgler , 2012a) .

In our work we find that well acknowledged guides and standards, such as CREW, are helping to create security and predictability amongst the library community. Such resources provide a set of rules that can be referenced over time, linking each individual's skills to a common focal point and creating a solid theoretic foundation. Standards and procedures that are used on an on-going basis are important to establish and ensure a common discarding practice. The Norwegian edition of CREW legitimises discarding and is a part of the professional library discourse. CREW is the theoretical framework that allows library staff to do the actual weeding and ensures that the discarding happens in a professional and consistent manner.

Cramped on the shelf?

Humour has played a central role in my work with discarding of library materials and has been used as part of a positive reformulation of a sensitive subject. Working with a controversial topic like weeding, humour can serve as a liberating factor. Humour helps to defuse and provide alternative inputs to the topic:

The psychological functions of humour can be classified into three broad categories: (1) cognitive and social benefits of the positive emotion of mirth, (2) uses of humour for social communication and influence, and (3) tension relief and coping (Martin, 2010).

Following the model of 'awfullibrarybooks.net', a website was established where I (as head of the Buskerud Bandits) regularly publish candidates for discarding - with

pictures of the covers. The use of illustrations, often involuntarily comic, reveals why these books should be removed from the collection. The titles come in part from weeding projects the county library has participated in and partly from proposals submitted by other libraries. The blog 'trangtihylla.wordpress.com' (Røgler, 2014) with its humorous theme is contributing to make discarding less controversial. The aim of the blog is to create awareness about weeding in an unconventional and unpretentious manner.

The blog was established in May 2010 and has on average about 800 visits a month. New blog postings are shared on Facebook and Twitter to reach out to more readers.

Weeding as art

The Bandit's second discarding project led to collaboration with the Norwegian artist, Rune Guneriussen. He wanted discarded books and has since created works of art from the thousands of books he received. Guneriussen is a concept artist working at the interface between structure and photography. His book structures have received coverage in national media, both on television, radio and newspapers. This form of cooperation was also mentioned in the White Paper on libraries in 2009 (Ministry of Culture, 2009).

Discarded books can also be used as building materials. At the library of Drammen, the employees made a castle out of the discarded books. The castle was opened by the Knight "Pager Turner" with a group of kindergarten children as happy guests. The fortress was a great eye-catcher in the children's department and was so widely used for playing and reading that after a few years of intensive service had

to be removed, because it was worn out.

Discarding is usually something that takes place in silence, without the user's knowledge. The idea of throwing away books is uncomfortable for both librarians and the public. However, this attitude stands in the way of the library's development. When the discarded books were transformed into art, we lifted them out in the public space. We dared to highlight weeding as part of professional practice.

The physical space

There is a growing focus in the library field, both nationally and internationally, on the library as a physical space. This coincides with the fact that the library's mission is changing. The library for the informed public must be organised according to people's needs in a broad sense. This often implies that there are less of both books and shelves. When some of the books and shelves disappear, there is room to rethink the library space. Many libraries have been inspired by the Danish report, "Public libraries in a knowledge society" and the four space model presented in the report in developing their physical space (The Agency for Library and Media, 2010).

The majority of the discarding's done by the Buskerud Bandits, has led to extensive changes in the library space. Although there is little or no money to purchase new furniture or other fixtures, it is still possible to make significant changes in the space generated.

Fewer and lower shelves give an increased sense of spaciousness. In one case, we were able to reduce the height of the shelves in the open space by removing the top shelf on all bookshelves. The difference was dramatic and the users were very happy to have a space that was both more appealing and easier to navigate.

After an intensive discarding in one school library, we carried out a major refurbishing project. We used almost 12 000 EUR to create a new library, including new shelving, furniture, paint and a new reading room (Røgler, 2010). Increased focus on the school library produced an increase in library use by students and helped to highlight the library's importance to the school management.

Dissemination through social media

The use of social media has played a key role in the spreading of the Buskerud Bandits results. Social media has been used to promote weeding in the library field. Displaying 'before and after' photos on Flickr, videos of the results on Vimeo and publishing reports on various websites, achieved a spread of results that would have been difficult without social media.

For example, the images on the photo-sharing website Flickr.com have had more than 5000 views. The images are used to document the work processes and to reinforce the message of the importance of weeding. The 'before and after' pictures in particular emphasise the effect discarding has on the library space (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/buskfyb/collections/72157623334641144>).

The library community in Norway has a national electronic discussion list called "Library Norway" where all members can discuss library policies and practices. More than half of all library staff in Norway are members of this group. The discussion group has been used regularly to promote and inform participants about various aspects of discarding library materials and collection development.

Visibility in the media

The Norwegian library debate may seem internal and introspective. Librarians

primarily discuss issues amongst themselves. The library community has long called for presence and political agenda setting in traditional media. The discarding project has come a long way in achieving this. Discarding books violates the common conception of how literature should be handled. Therefore, when weeding is conducted in public, with humour and commitment, it actually becomes newsworthy.

Our weeding stunts have been covered in the media, both locally, regionally and nationally. A journalist in an independent national weekly newspaper with an emphasis on politics, culture and research (Morgenbladet), found pictures from Hallingdal on Flickr and wrote a very critical article about discarding (Gundersen, 2008). The journalist's headline was: "The futurists wanted to burn the libraries. The librarians would rather throw the books away". The article led to debate in various media, both within and outside the library environment.

The Bandits have been focusing on political agenda setting. We want our library users to see libraries as relevant. In the summer 2012 I was interviewed by a national newspaper (Klassekampen) on the topic of discarding in a digital age (Flemmen, 2012). The article's main focus was on the decline in the number of books in Norwegian public libraries; a reduction of two million books over the past ten years. I pointed out that this was a positive development as many libraries look more like dusty archives than modern spaces for learning and cultural activities.

The Buskerud Bandits' participation in the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's (NRK) 'P2' radio programme "Radio Front ", was especially important in spreading knowledge about why discarding is necessary to wider culturally interested audience. The title of the programme in translation was: "About the collectors and their nature"

(Kvaal and Gjertsen, 2011). We were interviewed by a journalist, who was sceptical about disposal of library materials. She found her encounter with the book castle in Drammen distressing, especially when she discovered one of her favourite authors used as a book brick in the fortress. The programme still presented a good balance of perspectives, between weeding in libraries, an interview with an archivist and the artist Guneriussen, who spoke about his experiences with books as material for works of art.

The blog "Cramped on the shelf" was also noticed by some journalists at the NRK p1 radio station and early in the summer of 2013 I presented some of my favourite weeding candidates on national radio. It was an excellent opportunity to talk about the importance of weeding to an audience outside the library environment.

Professional agenda setting and training

These activities have contributed to an increased interest in deselection of library material and collection development in the library community. As the leader of the Bandits, I have in recent years held a series of talks on discarding both regionally, nationally and internationally. Several respondents commented in a survey conducted in 2012 that lectures on weeding had inspired participants to go back to their own libraries and start weeding. The experiences have also been shared in two Northumbria conferences, an international conference on statistics and measurement. (Røgler, 2009) and (Røgler, 2011).

The intervention that has been shown to have the greatest dispersion effect, was the organisation of the workshops on collection development. The Head of a county library had noticed our work and wanted me to hold a course for library staff in their

own county. The course has been developed into a workshop about weeding and collection development. These workshop sessions have now been held in fourteen of nineteen counties in Norway, for around 350 library staff.

The key elements of the workshop include that the participants are given time for reflection and space to talk about the challenges and painful emotions associated with discarding. From this process discussions about what are good discarding practices develop. Through the presentation of key topics and tools, combined with practical exercises, the participants increase their knowledge on weeding and collection development. Discarding of library material is primarily a practice. Feedback from the workshops has shown that the workshops form the bridge between thinking about discarding to actually do it.

The county library has been focusing on systematic discarding since 2008, through the Buskerud Bandits, weeding stunts, the CREW manual dissemination, the blog “Cramped on the shelf”, the use of social media, media coverage and various training programmes. These initiatives are all of a different nature and scale, which in our view is an important factor for it working in practice. Systematic development over time, with a variety of tools, are what we have experienced give the greatest effect.

In the second part I will show how the experiences from our various discarding measures and change work can be interpreted and elaborated through different theoretical perspectives.

From anguish to humour

There are numerous theories that seek to describe how change happens. To achieve

the goals of any development project, it is necessary to work with values, emotions, culture and traditions. Based on my experience, these are the key areas to address to make weeding happen.

An important tool when working with values has been strategic use of humour. Humour is an important factor to establish, maintain and enhance a good relationship. Since relationships are built on communication and interaction, humour can be an important bridge both to resolve conflicts and to create cohesion. Tensions that occur between people during weeding projects, which can threaten good communication, can be lightened or done away with by the proper use of humour.

There are countless stories that have received negative coverage in the media, with poor relations between library owners and users as a result of weeding. A Chief librarian in the county had to report to her Councillor, because she discarded public property, no matter how outdated and little used it was. A more curious example was a librarian, who filled a car with books, drove into the woods and buried the discarded books to avoid public attention. Some years later, the books were dug up again, because the Municipality were building a nursing home in the area. Such accounts are threats to the positive progress of weeding.

Workshops about discarding have been important meeting places to develop strategies to counter resistance to weeding. Opponents of discarding are recognised, and their reasons and feelings are taken seriously. Nevertheless, personal or individual resistance cannot mean that weeding should not take place. My task in such cases is to confirm that weeding needs to happen and to get on with it. The aim is to take fewer emotional decisions and more which are academically justified. Opponents of discarding are given time to reflect on their own resistance to weeding

and knowledge is shared with them about why discarding is important. Together we aim at a more knowledge-and experience-based practice. In a workshop I held, there was one man that at the end of the day, in the plenary session, stated that he would never like discarding, but that after this workshop he understood why it was necessary.

Positive reformulations have also proven useful. Instead of asking – *'Why it is so difficult to start weeding?'* I tend to ask - *What are the benefits of discarding?* Prior to the workshops, every participant is required to select good 'weeding candidates' from their own collections. The task is a starting point for reflection. Every weeding candidate is then shared and discussed at the start of the workshop. The presentations always create lots of laughter and reflection, which help to set the mood for the day. Many of the attendees have their own stories and experiences that they want to share. It makes a significant impression, when a librarian says in a humorous tone: "It's only the first 1000 you discard, that hurts."

From uncertainty to confidence

Tensions and conflicts are often expressed when library employees are discarding. Each employee finds her- or himself in a conflict between the professional and the private, between her/his own professionalism and local practices. Library staff may also feel the fear of negative reactions from the public, media or library owner.

Different weeding practices in the library are also an important factor to address, especially when library employees fail to weed. Fear of internal conflicts in the library can be a critical factor. When the department for adult books weed far more than the children's books department and there is no agreement on procedures for

discarding, the consequences can easily lead to internal disagreement.

The aim of the various measures is to enter into dialogue with sceptics and work as a team with those who are positive. This is the main reason why the Buskerud Bandits never travel to a library without being invited. There must be a positive desire for change in their discarding practices, before the Bandits intervene. An example from a weeding project in a local high school illustrates the importance of this:

When the Buskerud Bandits arrive at a library, the first hour is always the most important. This is where we review what to do and take the temperature on possible resistance to discarding. In this case, the head of the library was very sceptical and did not want our help. However, it was she who had invited us in to help her. By acknowledging her feelings while emphasising her professionalism and responsibility for the collection, she gradually became less resentful. The head of the library is ultimately in control of what is to be weeded, and has every right to overrule decisions the Bandits take (translated from Røgler, 2010).

From theory to practice

The Buskerud Bandits have an action oriented approach to development. We conduct our discarding's in close cooperation with local staff and our interventions are always based on invitation. We emphasise that we work practically, while having a strong focus on developing a knowledge-based reflection as an effect of the practical work.

Many of the measures from the Buskerud Bandits are based on situated learning

theory, which emphasises learning through participation in social communities. We follow to some extent John Dewey's understanding that teaching is not only about learning the facts and the starting point is rather the skills and knowledge that students learn and integrate into their lives. Interaction is the central element for Dewey and for us. This practical element, 'learning by doing' for Dewey was based on his affiliation to the philosophical school of pragmatism.

Only in education, never in the life of farmer, sailor, merchant, physician, or laboratory experimenter, does knowledge mean primarily a store of information aloof from doing. (Dewey, 1916, p 218)

Learning through coherent experience, problem solving and self-study, allows us to learn how to learn. For Dewey, as for us it is important to develop the qualities that make a person able to act, finding ways and new solutions in a lifelong perspective.

From peripheral to active participant

In continuation of these useful perspectives on learning, Lave and Wenger's theories of 'communities of practice' are also very relevant. The concept of 'situated learning theory' can be traced back to Lave and Wenger's theory of legitimate peripheral participation'. Participants who practice together have a legitimate, rightful belonging to the social community. 'Peripheral' in our context, applies to the beginners not participating fully in discarding and that there is a gradual progression as they become more familiar with discarding to become an active participant.

The spread of the achievements of the Buskerud Bandits created interest among more peripheral participants in the network of libraries in Buskerud. An example of this was the discarding at a school library where the head librarian was initially very

sceptical of discarding. Her positive experiences with weeding, led to another wary library manager at another high school approaching the Bandits for assistance.

To change practice requires that each participant has learnt some new ways to perform their tasks that they consider useful. Lave and Wenger argue that learning must be considered a dimension of social practice. In this way, learning is a concept that is important for the production and reproduction of social practices in the social world. Lave and Wenger try to make the point that participating in the social world is a starting point for learning through conceptualising participation as "legitimate peripheral participation".

...learning is not merely situated in practice - as if it were some independent verifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world... Legitimate peripheral participation is proposed as a descriptor of engagement in social practice that entails learning as an integral constituent (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Legitimate peripheral participation refers both to the development of individual skills, participation in social practices, and the reproduction and transformation of community practices. Sustained learning processes; understood as appropriation and transformation of practice through participation, are a crucial factor for the realisation, organisation and (re)structuring of the social world. In the work of the Bandits this learning process is about giving value to the process of discarding in this social world.

Learning is first and foremost about making people full, rather than periphery, participants in the social world they live in. Secondary to this, is conveying abstract knowledge about the world, which people may or may not choose to use. What

characterises a library employee as a full participant in a discarding team is that s/he takes an active part in all aspects of discarding. S/he chooses weeding candidates, discusses the selection with his/her colleagues and performs the practical discarding work.

Cognitive dissonance

We constantly seek balance and consistency between the way we behave and think. Weeding is uncomfortable, because it set two values up against each other. We want to preserve the books and renew collections at the same time. Cognitive dissonance is a form of inner conflict - an uncomfortable experience that observations, assumptions, attitudes and behaviour are not connected.

This conflict results in a need to change something in order to make things fit together - behaviour, attitude or the way you think. Cognitive dissonance theory has traditionally been a key theory to explain changes in attitude; as Festinger describes it:

When there is a gap between what one does and what one thinks, or what you do, and what you say cognitive dissonance may arise. (Festinger, 1957).

Every year new library students are interviewed about why they want to be librarians. Many students relate that 'the joy of reading' is the main reason. Library workers know that one of the core tasks in library work is to discard. At the same time, there is a feeling of discomfort removing books from the collections. This incoherence can be described as cognitive dissonance.

Weeding of books has strong negative connotations and is often associated with

the bonfires of dictatorships and censorship. As a consequence, some library staff avoids weeding all together. By not having to weed they do not have to familiarise themselves with the problems and make assessments that are perceived as difficult. Librarians must learn to distinguish between their own private discarding practices in their personal environments and what they do in their professional work. Librarians need to use their acquired knowledge, practical experience, reflection in action and available aids to discard in a professional manner in the public space.

My attitude to weeding was put to the test when the County library received the first request for help on discarding. In my encounter with what could be characterised as a problematic situation, I had to acquire more knowledge about weeding and train for reflection in action.

The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation, which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings, which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment, which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation (Schön, 1983: 68).

Procrastination or postponing something you have planned to do is also an important factor in weeding. Instead of assessing if a book is a weeding candidate, librarians choose to store it or insert more shelves in the library. This is a very resource-intensive way of postponing the problem.

To alleviate cognitive dissonance when discarding, I have found that more systematic information gathering and reflection in action can be helpful.

As [inquirers] frame the problem of the situation, they determine the features to which they will attend, the order they will attempt to impose on the situation, the directions in which they will try to change it. In this process, they identify both the ends to be sought and the means to be employed. (Schön, 1983: 165)

When discarding is repeated on a regular basis, an extensive repertoire is established that reduces the cognitive dissonance.

Survey on weeding in autumn 2012

In September 2012, the members of the national electronic discussion list 'Library Norway' were invited to respond to a survey on weeding and collection development. The purpose of this study was to identify the extent to which the activities undertaken by the Buskerud Bandits had made an impact in the library field. Approximately 3200 people subscribe (<http://tinyurl.com/p5ar9m2>) to the list. The number of respondents was 348. It is reasonable to assume that those who responded to the survey have a special interest in discarding. Just over half of the respondents worked in public libraries. Two out of five of the respondents were very interested in collection development, while half said that they were (on average) interested in discarding and collection development. It was rewarding to learn that 97 % of the respondents were working in libraries where weeding had taken place during 2012.

Respondents were asked which activities from the Buskerud Bandits they knew about. The table below shows how the responses were distributed according to the different activities (see Table 2).

Activity	Percentage knowing the activity
CREW	71 %
Courses and lectures	62 %
“Crowded on the shelf”	58 %
Before- and after pictures on Flickr.com	43 %

Table 2 Responses distributed according to activities

One third of the respondents work in libraries that use the CREW manual and almost all respondents reported that CREW has given them greater confidence in dealing with discarding.

My assumption about the importance of the library manager was confirmed. Almost nine out of ten respondents stated that management is responsible for collection development. This high number says a lot about the importance of the leadership’s role for the operation and development of the library. The management’s priorities are crucial for shaping what happens in the development of the library. I also included a question about what could be done to make the leaders even more concerned with collection development. One of the responses pointed to the need to get people outside the library to highlight the need for weeding:

That someone from outside (e.g. from the County library) comes with fresh eyes and says that certainly more can be discarded than is currently happening... (Røgler, 2012a)

The results from the survey support that focus on collection development has been

made more visible in the library field and that several of the tools developed are in use.

Conclusions

This development project demonstrates that it is possible to change the practices of the library employee locally, regionally and nationally. The work also shows that changes in work routines are most effective when they occur systematically over time with many different activities involved.

By practising weeding together in a community of practice, we develop our own discarding practices. Development is thus an example of learning through 'legitimate peripheral participation'. A success factor in all change work is to have a solid grounding in the practical field, which gives the necessary credibility. Through their work the Bandits have gained both credibility and trust.

The results of the survey conducted in 2012, emphasise the leader's key role in all change work. The manager plays a crucial role for discarding taking place in libraries. The manager has the power to define what is given priority. It has been illustrated that when the head of the library says and shows in action that weeding is important, discarding will take place.

I believe that the way this change work has been conducted can be used in other similar situations that may be considered problematic. The Buskerud Bandit's development work on discarding and collection development can serve as a model for situations where proximity and interaction with the field of practice is central to achieving results.

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